

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for prioritizing a customer inquiry, the method comprising:  
  
receiving an inquiry from a customer;  
  
prompting the customer to provide an identification number;  
  
retrieving, when the customer provides the identification number, customer  
information about the customer based on the provided identification number;  
  
computing a customer prioritization score based on the retrieved customer  
information; and  
  
prioritizing the customer inquiry based on the computed customer prioritization  
score, such that higher prioritized customer inquiries are responded to sooner than lower  
prioritized customer inquiries.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the customer inquiry, further includes  
attaching to the inquiry a timestamp identifying the time the inquiry was received.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the customer information comprises financial  
information describing the customer's likelihood to purchase an offered product.

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4. The method of claim 1, wherein the customer information includes a pre-determined customer prioritization score associated with likelihood that the customer may purchase an offered product.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the customer inquiry with the highest score is responded to first.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein prioritizing the customer inquiry further includes assigning the customer inquiry to a particular queue based on the computed prioritization score.

7. The method of claim 2, wherein customer inquiries having the same prioritization score are responded to in the order they were received according to the time stamp.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein if additional customer information is needed, then the customer is prompted to respond to predefined prioritization queries created to determine the customer's likelihood to purchase an offered product.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the customer prioritization score is re-computed based on the customer's responses to the predefined prioritization queries.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein prioritizing the customer inquiry further includes assigning the customer inquiry to at least one of a high-level queue, a mid-level queue, or a low-level queue, based on the computer prioritization score.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein each customer inquiry may be assigned to any one of a multiple queues, wherein each queue is associated with a range of predetermined scores, wherein the customer inquiries are assigned to one of the multiple queues based on the computed prioritization score and the associated ranges of the multiple queues, and wherein the customer inquiries assigned to queues with a higher range of predetermined scores are responded to sooner than customer inquiries assigned to queues with a lower range of predetermined scores.

12. A method for prioritizing a customer inquiry, the method comprising:  
receiving an inquiry from a customer;  
prompting the customer to provide customer information in response to a predetermined set of prioritization queries created to determine the customer's likelihood to purchase an offered product.;  
when the customer provides customer information in response to the predetermined set of queries, computing a customer prioritization score based on the customer responses; and

prioritizing the customer inquiry based on the computed customer prioritization score, such that higher prioritized customer inquiries are responded to sooner than lower prioritized customer inquiries.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein each prioritization query is created to obtain a response providing information concerning a customer's likelihood to purchase and offered product or service.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein receiving the customer inquiry, further includes attaching to the inquiry a timestamp identifying the time the inquiry was received.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein each possible response to one of the predetermined prioritization queries is associated with a predetermined score.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the customer information comprises information concerning whether the customer has financial means for purchasing an offered product.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the customer information comprises information concerning whether the customer desires to purchase an offered product.

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18. The method of claim 12, wherein the customer information comprises whether the customer has a credit card.

19. The method of claim 12, wherein the customer information comprises whether the customer has a checking account.

20. The method of claim 12, wherein prioritizing the customer inquiry further includes assigning the customer inquiry to at least one of a high-level queue, a mid-level queue, or a low-level queue, based on the computer prioritization score.

21. The method of claim 12, wherein each customer inquiry may be assigned to any one of a multiple queues, wherein each queue is associated with a range of predetermined scores, wherein the customer inquiries are assigned to one of the multiple queues based on the computed prioritization score and the associated ranges of the multiple queues, and wherein the customer inquiries assigned to queues with a higher range of predetermined scores are responded to sooner than customer inquiries assigned to queues with a lower range of predetermined scores.

22. A system for prioritizing a customer inquiry, the system comprising:  
  
means for receiving an inquiry from a customer;  
  
means for prompting the customer to provide an identification number;

means for retrieving, when the customer provides the identification number, customer information about the customer based on the provided identification number;

means for computing a customer prioritization score based on the retrieved customer information; and

means for prioritizing the customer inquiry based on the computed customer prioritization score, such that higher prioritized customer inquiries are responded to sooner than lower prioritized customer inquiries.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein means for receiving the customer inquiry, further includes means for attaching to the inquiry a timestamp identifying the time the inquiry was received.

24. The system of claim 22, wherein the customer information comprises financial information describing the customer's likelihood to purchase an offered product.

25. The system of claim 22, wherein the customer information includes a pre-determined customer prioritization score associated with likelihood that the customer may purchase an offered product.

26. The system of claim 22, wherein the customer inquiry with the highest score is responded to first.

27. The system of claim 22, wherein means for prioritizing the customer inquiry further includes means for assigning the customer inquiry to a particular queue based on the computed prioritization score.

28. The system of claim 23, wherein customer inquiries having the same prioritization score are responded to in the order they were received according to the time stamp.

29. The system of claim 22, wherein if additional customer information is needed, then the customer is prompted to respond to predefined prioritization queries created to determine the customer's likelihood to purchase an offered product.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein the customer prioritization score is re-computed based on the customer's responses to the predefined prioritization queries.

31. The system of claim 22, wherein means for prioritizing the customer inquiry further includes means for assigning the customer inquiry to at least one of a high-level queue, a mid-level queue, or a low-level queue, based on the computer prioritization score.

32. The system of claim 22, wherein each customer inquiry may be assigned to any one of a multiple queues, wherein each queue is associated with a range of predetermined scores, wherein the customer inquiries are assigned to one of the multiple queues based on the computed prioritization score and the associated ranges of the multiple queues, and wherein the customer inquiries assigned to queues with a higher range of predetermined scores are responded to sooner than customer inquiries assigned to queues with a lower range of predetermined scores.

33. A system for prioritizing a customer inquiry, the system comprising:

- means for receiving an inquiry from a customer;
- means for prompting the customer to provide customer information in response to a predetermined set of prioritization queries created to determine the customer's likelihood to purchase an offered product.;
- when the customer provides customer information in response to the predetermined set of queries, means for computing a customer prioritization score based on the customer responses; and
- means for prioritizing the customer inquiry based on the computed customer prioritization score, such that higher prioritized customer inquiries are responded to sooner than lower prioritized customer inquiries.

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34. The system of claim 33, wherein each prioritization query is created to obtain a response providing information concerning a customer's likelihood to purchase and offered product or service.

35. The system of claim 33, wherein means for receiving the customer inquiry, further includes means for attaching to the inquiry a timestamp identifying the time the inquiry was received.

36. The system of claim 33, wherein each possible response to one of the predetermined prioritization queries is associated with a predetermined score.

37. The system of claim 33, wherein the customer information comprises information concerning whether the customer has financial means for purchasing an offered product.

38. The system of claim 33, wherein the customer information comprises information concerning whether the customer desires to purchase an offered product.

39. The system of claim 33, wherein the customer information comprises whether the customer has a credit card.

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40. The system of claim 33, wherein the customer information comprises whether the customer has a checking account.

41. The system of claim 33, wherein means for prioritizing the customer inquiry further includes means for assigning the customer inquiry to at least one of a high-level queue, a mid-level queue, or a low-level queue, based on the computer prioritization score.

42. The system of claim 33, wherein each customer inquiry may be assigned to any one of a multiple queues, wherein each queue is associated with a range of predetermined scores, wherein the customer inquiries are assigned to one of the multiple queues based on the computed prioritization score and the associated ranges of the multiple queues, and wherein the customer inquiries assigned to queues with a higher range of predetermined scores are responded to sooner than customer inquiries assigned to queues with a lower range of predetermined scores.

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